

Appl. No. 10/081,963
Amdt. dated Dec. 8, 2004
Reply to Office action of July 01, 2002

Amendements to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-9 (canceled).

Claims 10-13 (withdrawn).

Claim 14 (new): A method for preparing an etchant comprising a solution of tetramethylammonium hydroxide in water, wherein

- A liquid source of silicate ions is mixed with said solution, and
- An oxidizer is added to said etchant at a time later than 10 minutes following immersion of a sample comprised of silicon in said etchant.

Claim 15 (new): The method of claim 14, wherein said oxidizer is ammonium peroxydisulfate.

Claim 16 (new): The method of claim 14, wherein said oxidizer is obtained from a liquid source of oxidizer.

Claim 17 (new). The method of claim 16, wherein said liquid source of oxidizer is a solution of ammonium peroxydisulfate in water.

Claim 18 (new). The method of claim 14, wherein a quantity of tetramethylammonium hydroxide is added to said etchant at a time later than ten minutes following immersion of said sample in said etchant.

Claim 19 (new). The method of claim 18, wherein said quantity of tetramethylammonium hydroxide is sufficient to maintain the pH of said etchant substantially above the threshold for silicate precipitation.

Claim 20 (new). The method of claim 14, wherein said liquid source of dissolved silicate ions is a colloidal suspension of silicon dioxide.